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The Measure of CHRISTIAN BENEFICENCE,

AND

*The Usefulness and Necessity of Commissions
of Charitable Uses.*

A

SERMON

Preached in the

Abbey-Church at *Bath*,

MAY 18. 1735.

BEFORE

The Commissioners for Charitable
Uses for the County of *Somerset*.

By THOMAS BOWYER, M. A. Vicar of
Martock in *Somersetshire*.

Published at Their Request.

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TO THE

Right Reverend Father in GOD,

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Henry Locket,	Samuel Taylor,
Thomas Bowyer,	<i>Clerks.</i>

The COMMISSIONERS for *Charitable Uses*
for the County of *Somerset*, (the Borough of
Ivelchester excepted)

This SERMON is,

With great Deference and Esteem;

DEDICATED;

By their most Obedient

Humble Servant,

Thomas Bowyer,

THE

PREFACE.

THE great Complaint of the Abuse of pious and charitable Donations within the County of Somerset, having induced some Gentlemen to take out a Commission to examine into such Complaints, and to settle the Charities according to the Will and Intention of their Donors, gave Occasion to the following Discourse : and if it may in any Respect serve the Cause of Charity in general, by instructing and persuading Men to observe a more stated Rule, and to set apart a larger Proportion in their Giving : if, in particular, it may prevail upon Gentlemen of other Counties to take out Commissions, (where they are really wanting) and faithfully to execute them, I shall have my Aim, and shall be under no Concern for the Censures this Discourse may meet with in the World.

The

The great Objections against taking out these Commissions, are the Expence and Difficulty of executing them, and the frequent Want of good Effect attending the Execution of them.

It must be owned, that as Things now stand, this is a very difficult, expensive, and dilatory Work, and that it is required of those who take it upon them, to be zealous of Good Works, to have a great deal of Courage, and Patience also.

It were to be wished therefore that the Legislature would take this Matter into their Consideration, and find out Ways and Means to make Proceedings of this Nature less expensive and troublesome; more expedite and easy.

And if the original Donations were writ with a Pen of Iron, and publicly inscribed in the Church; If annual Accounts of Parochial and other publick Charities, were yearly not only to be publicly inspected and examined in the Parish, but to be carried to the Visitations also, there to undergo a Scrutiny; If Ordinaries (who before the Statute of the 43d of Queen Elizabeth had Visitatorial Power in this Case, and this Power is in it provided for) were, together

The P R E F A C E. vii

ther with some others, endued with sufficient Authority to censure the Misconduct of Trustees, or ex Officio to order a Commission to be taken out and executed at the publick Expence;—If Commissioners were enabled to enforce their Authority without that dilatory and expensive Method of applying to the Court of Chancery, (which, tho' it seldom or never, when applied to upon just and reasonable Grounds, refuses Assistance, now hath granted it readily to the Commissioners of this County, with Thankfulness it must be acknowledged, to all the Applications they have made for Orders to inforce their Process, yet still occasions great Delay) upon every Insult and Contempt of it;—If Expences of Appeals were made less burthensome; If some Additions of this kind were made to the Laws now in Being, for the preserving Charitable Donations, they would in a great measure oblige Trustees to a more regular and faithful Execution of their Trust, and the Grievances objected would be more effectually redressed.

But I beg Pardon for entering into a Consideration of a Matter which well deserves the most serious Thoughts of our most eminent Lawyers.

*With respect to the other Objection taken from the frequent Want of Success, it must
be*

viii **The P R E F A C E.**

*be own'd, that they have been frequently taken out, and yet not duly executed, and when executed, sometimes repealed: But whose Fault is this? It is in a great measure the Fault of those who are entrusted with the Execution of them, who either altogether refuse to act, and so neglect that Opportunity of doing that Good which is put into the Power of their Hands to do, or else are not sufficiently diligent and regular in their acting:— And if they are, yet still it is no Wonder that Decrees, made mostly by Gentlemen who are not to be supposed to be so well versed in the Law, should sometimes be set aside. After all, if we take a View of the several Determinations of the Court of Chancery in Appeals of this Kind, * we shall find but very few Decrees that have been entirely set aside. And would the Gentlemen who are at any time entrusted with these Commissions, entirely divest themselves of all Prejudices and Party Influence, and make the Design of the Founder the Grand Rule of their Determination;— Would they act with Diligence, and use the best Consideration they are capable of; would they, to all their other utmost Endeavours, add their Prayers, there would be little or no Reason to fear the Want of Success.*

* *Vide Duke's Law of Commissions of Charitable Uses, in which, of all the Cases therein mention'd, there are not, I think, above two or three entirely repealed.*

A

SERMON

Preached in the

Abbey-Church at *Bath*.

1 COR. xvi. 2.

Upon the first Day of the Week, let every one of you lay by him in Store as God hath prospered him.

THOU' Beneficence to the Poor be a Duty most agreeable to our *Reason*, and still more strongly enforced by *Revelation*, insomuch that all Men, who have any Sense of *Religion*, yea even of *Humanity*, acknowledge, and in some measure practise it; yet is it perform'd by few, in the same Manner, and to that high Degree, which the Gospel does require.

B

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The grand Pretences are *Inability* in ourselves, and the *Abuses* of Charity in others: They that have much, give *little*, and they that have *little*, give none at all; and because that which is already given is very often much abus'd, therefore even they who are in great Ability, tho' the most proper Opportunity, and the most proper Objects are offer'd, they presently begin to make Excuse.

This dangerous Error and Neglect, does, in a great measure, proceed from Mens not knowing and not considering that they ought to set apart at least some Share of their clear Incomes to *Charitable Uses*; they do not attend to the plain Rule of my Text, *Let every one, &c.*

I shall therefore take Occasion from these Words of the Apostle, (which tho' deliver'd by him to the *Corinthians*, upon a particular Emergency, are yet applicable to all Christians) to shew,

1st. That every one is obliged to proportion his Giving to his Receiving.

And because it may not be sufficient to know this in general, without being informed more particularly what this Proportion is;

2^{dly}.

2^{dly}. I shall attempt to assign that Rule of Proportion in giving, which we Christians ought not at least to fall short of, which we ought rather to exceed.

And because it may still be a Discouragement with those whom God hath prosper'd abundantly, to observe this Rule, and to *lay up in Store* for others, for the Time to come; that the Foundations of *Charity* already laid, are so often so miserably perverted and abus'd;

3^{dly}. I shall endeavour to lessen the Weight, and to remove the Force of this Objection.

1st. Then, I am to shew, that every one is oblig'd to proportion his Giving to his Receiving.

Let every one, says the Apostle; he excepts none; not him who has the least Income, no not him who receives nothing but what is the Fruit of his own Labour; whom he more particularly obliges to Acts of Charity; *Let him labour working with his Hands, that he may have to give to him that needeth* *.

* Eph. iv. 8.

Nor is it sufficient even for him to do this once or twice, but he is to make it the standing Rule of his Practice; *on the first Day of the Week.*

And if he is required to give in Proportion to what he receives, or gains one Week, why not another, as oft as it returns? and since he has *the Poor always with him*, and there are Weekly, Yearly Demands for *Charity*, he is to distribute Yearly, or *on the first Day of the Year*, in Proportion as he is prospered; and then only to be freed from the Obligation of *distributing to the Necessities* of his poor Brethren, when there are no more poor Brethren that want his Distributions.

It is further observable, that this Collection was to be made *on the first Day of the Week*, the Lord's Day. Works of *Piety and Charity*, being joined together; and our *Alms* must follow our *Prayers*, if we expect that they should come up for a Memorial before God.

In Obedience to this Command, we find the *Primitive Christians*, according to the Account which *J. Martyr* gives of their Publick Service on *Sunday*, did join *Alms* to their *Prayers*, and the Eucharist; after
the

the Celebration of which, then says he, *They that are in Ability, help those that are in Want; and we continually succour one another; then they that are able and willing, give what they think fit, and what is thus collected is laid up in the Hands of the President, and he distributes it to the Fatherless and Widows—and is the common Overseer of the Poor, and of all those that are in Distress*.*

In this, as well as other respects, does *Ours* copy after the *Primitive Church*; In Cathedrals and Collegiate Churches and Colleges she requires, in *Parochial* Churches, she makes Provision for weekly Communions, and at every Communion orders, that *Alms* be offer'd up also.

But to proceed to others, which are parallel to, and a further Confirmation of the Doctrine of my Text, *Honour the Lord with thy Substance, and with the first Fruits of all thine Increase †*; and therefore our Works of Piety and Charity ought to be according to the Increase of our Substance,

To the same Purpose are those Words of *St. Paul, This I say, He which soweth*

* Justin Mart. Apol. † Prov. iii. 9.

sparingly,

sparingly, shall reap sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully *.

Which Words, as they suppose, that he who receives *much*, shou'd give *much*; so they are the greatest Encouragement to the so giving.

I shall only take Notice of one Passage of Scripture more in Proof of this Point; our Blessed Saviour's commending the *Poor Widow* for *throwing her Mite into the Treasury*; from whence it is plainly evident, that there are scarce any so Poor as to be altogether excus'd from Works of *Piety* and *Charity*; of Consequence that they who are Rich, shou'd *be glad to give*, and *ready to distribute*, according to their Power; and be *Rich in Good Works*.

And indeed, had we not so many Texts of Scripture to prove this Proposition, yet it is evident, from the Reason of the Thing itself, that they who have but a small Share of *this World's Goods*, should yet *lay in Store* a little out of it; they whom God hath prosper'd with Abundance, shou'd give abundantly; which is agreeable also to, and confirmed by the *Parable of the Talents*; for if he, who only had one Talent, was condemned

Christian Beneficence. 15

as an *unprofitable Servant*; not because he consumed it upon his *Lusts*, only because he made no good Use of it, and let it lye hid in a *Napkin*; how shall he escape, who has *five* or *ten Talents* committed to his Charge, and lets one or two of them lye useles, unemploy'd in Good Works? And thus doth it, I hope, evidently appear to every one who hath *Ears to hear*, that we ought to proportion our *Giving* to our *Receiving*, or, in the Words of *Tobit*, that we ought to be *Merciful after our Power*; if we have much, to give plentifully; and if we have but little, yet even then gladly to do our *Diligence to give of that little*.

But still it remains to be enquired, what is this *Rule of Proportion*? and therefore I proceed,

2dly. To endeavour to shew, what Proportion in Giving, we Christians ought to observe, which we shou'd rather exceed than fall short of.

And it may be of Use to us in this Enquiry, to consider what *Proportion* of their Income the *Jews* were oblig'd to give unto the Poor, which we learn from *Deut. xiv. 28. At the End of three Years thou shalt bring forth all the Tithe of thine Increase, the same Year, and shalt lay it up within thy*

thy Gates; and the Stranger, and the Fatherless, and the Widow, which are within thy Gates, shall eat and be satisfied.—To the same Purpose is *Deut. xxvi. 12.* From whence it is evident, that the *Proportion* which the *Jews* were oblig'd to observe in giving to the Poor, was as *One to Thirty*; besides the permitting them to lease very plentifully in the Field every Year,—the restoring the Pledge to them before Night, and the like; besides also what they were oblig'd to contribute to the Temple, and the Service thereof.

I do not pretend, that this particular *Law* is still in Force with us Christians: but yet when the Duty itself is of *Moral, Eternal Obligation*, and *Divine Appointment* hath at any time, or any where, plainly laid down the Measure of it, this surely ought to be very carefully attended to by us; as in the Case of the Seventh Day being commanded the *Jews*, to be kept *Holy unto the Lord*, tho' this particular Command is allowed not to oblige Christians to keep holy the self-same Day, yet they have ever from hence thought themselves obliged to keep one Day in seven *Holy*.

And that Christians also are obliged even to exceed the *Jews* in Works of *Charity* and Mercy, will be evident, if we consider,
that

that Christ, as he himself tells us, *Came not to destroy the Law, but to fulfil it*; and *Alms-giving* being a Part not of the *Ceremonial* but *Moral* Law, which he fulfilled, we must of Consequence be obliged to it in a higher Degree than the *Jews* were: *Irenæus* and *St. Jerom* expressly apply these Commands to the Duty of *Alms-giving*. Thus the former mentioning the Improvement of the Law by Christ, says, *Instead of giving the Tenth every third Year, give all that thou hast unto the Poor*; and this, saith he, is an Act of Christ's not *destroying*, but *fulfilling and extending the Law*.

The latter, in his Exposition on 2 Cor. viii. 20. says, *Lest any should say, How did Christ fulfil the Law, when we see Christians not to give so much Alms as by the Law of Moses was prescribed to be given?*

Again, our Blessed Saviour expressly tells us, that except *our Righteousness exceeds the Righteousness of the Scribes and Pharisees*, we shall in no case enter into the *Kingdom of Heaven**.

The Word which we here translate *Righteousness*, is of the same Signification with that which is rendered *Alms-giving*

* Matth. v. 20.

in the LXX; and it is observed, that there is only one Word in the *Hebrew* to express both. Thus that which is translated ‡ *Break off thy Sins by Righteousness*, is in the Septuagint and vulgar *Latin*, by *Alms-giving*. * *Thou hast loved Righteousness*, is, *Thou hast loved Alms-giving*; and in many more Places. Again, *Take heed that you do not your Alms before Men*, in some Copies is your *Righteousness before Men*: So that this Word does very often in the Old Testament denote that *Legal Alms-giving* (which was therefore properly called *Righteousness*) which was required; and if the Word here may not be taken in so narrow a Sense, but in its full Latitude, as comprehending the whole Duty of Man, yet as *Charity* is the *greatest* of Virtues, it must comprehend this also; so that these Words do afford us a plain Proof that our *Alms-giving* must exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees, (the strictest Sect of the Jews) if we expect to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven, &c. and to this Purpose are those Words urged in the *Apostolical Constitutions*:

So let your Righteousness abound in taking more Care of the Fatherless and Widows, and of all that are in Want. But our Sa-

† Dan. iv. 27.

‡ Psal. xxxii. 5.

viour is still more exprefs in raising our Obligation to this Duty higher than ever it was before.

Thus tho' the Command given to the young Man in the Gospel, *to sell all that he had, and give to the Poor*, be not obligatory to all Christians, which is evident, (to go no further) from the Words of my Text, which only requires *a Proportion* of what *we are blessed with* to be laid out in *Alms*, yet there are other Commands given by him to all Christians, which seem to carry this Duty to a very high Degree of Perfection.

Thus * *sell that you have, and give Alms*, and † *give Alms of such Things as you have; and to all Things are clean unto you*; and our Saviour mightily enforces these Commands in the Account he gives us of the Day of Judgment.

But tho' we had not these plain Commands, yet it is evident from the very *Nature* and *Genius* of the *Law* and the *Gospel*, that the *latter* obliges to higher Degrees of Perfection in *Charity* than the former.

* Luke xii. 33.

† C. xi. 14.

For the former had only *the Promises of this Life*, the latter has chiefly, if not only, the *Promises of that which is to come*. — The Contempt of the World was not so much as required in the one, it is the great and distinguishing Duty of the other.

The Relation betwixt Christians is still closer ; for we are all *Members of Christ, and Members one of another*, so that if one Member suffer, all the Members suffer with it.

And the Duty of *Love* is required of all Christians to such an extensive Measure and Degree, that it is therefore said to be a *New Commandment*, and therefore obliges us to higher Instances of it than the Law required.

Since then the *Jews* were obliged in Point of *Legal Righteousness* to give the 30th Part of their annual Increase to the Poor, besides all the other Gifts which were required at their Hands; — Since the Nature of that Dispensation we live under, the Relation we stand in to one another, the Commands, the Promises, and the Threatnings also of that Gospel, by which we shall be judged, require us not only to go and do likewise, but to exceed in *Works of Righteousness*,

ousness, and in Acts of Charity; It is plain, that the 30th Part of our clear yearly Income (where Reasons of strict Justice do not demand otherwise) is the least, the lowest Measure of *Charity* that can be assigned; and that he is *worse than a Jew, and hath denied the Faith, who does not at least provide so much for the Poor.*

Thus far the *Just Man*; how far the *Good Man* will go further, whether he will direct the 20th, the 10th, or a still larger Share of his clear Income to pious and charitable Uses, is in a great measure left to his own Discretion; only let him consider, that the *more* he gives *here*, the *more* he will receive *hereafter* from God; and then he will still more abound in all *Works of Charity, and Labours of Love.*

And need we any further Arguments to persuade us thus to abound?

Were the *Jews* obliged to give the 30th Part of their Increase to the Poor; and shall we consume *all that we have upon ourselves*, or employ little or none of it in Works of Charity? Were they who had only *Temporal Promises*, obliged thus to *abound* in good *Works*, and shall not we, who have eternal Promises, more and more abound in them?

Were

Were they who had not *so much tasted that the Lord is gracious*, enjoined to such a Degree of shewing forth their Mercy and Compassion to their poor Brethren; and shall we, to whom is manifested the Love of God in the most wonderful and amazing Manner, shew less Degree of Love and Mercy to our Fellow-Creatures?

Did they who only *loved those who loved them, and hated their Enemies*, expend so much in Offices of Love? and shall not we much more, who are obliged to *love all Men*, yea, our Enemies as ourselves?—Be it so, that our Blessed Saviour hath not given us any particular Rule, yet in general he hath enjoined us the highest Instances of Charity: and it was prophesied of him, *That in the Day of his Power, his People should offer him Free-will Offerings*: And surely our *Free-will Offerings* should not be fewer in Number, and less in Quantity than what the *Stiff-necked, Hard-hearted Jews* were compelled to give. Except we exceed them in this, as well as other Instances of *Righteousness* and Mercy, we shall in no case *enter into the Kingdom of Heaven*. Let us therefore be prevailed upon to observe the Rule of my Text, and on the *First Day of the Week*, or on the First Day of the Year, or as our clear In-

crease

crease comes in, *lay by us in Store* such a Share of it, *as God hath prospered us*; no longer look upon it as our own, but as his, *who gives us all Things richly to enjoy.*

Hereby shall we know, that we give as much as we ought to give; and not part with it grudgingly, or of Necessity, but as chearful Givers.

But against this Rule it may be objected, That the Law of the Land hath excused us from the voluntary private Observance of it, by providing for the Poor who are in present Necessity and Want: — And against *laying up in Store for 'em for the Time to come*, the general great Abuse of those *Charitable Foundations*, which are already laid, is sufficient Excuse.

In Answer to the former Objection, I shall only observe, that notwithstanding the *legal Provision for the Poor*; yet *there is Room*; — Room enough and to spare, for all the Donations of the most over-flowing Bounty: — and if that which we are compelled to give by the *Law*, be given out of the Proportion allotted for *Charitable Uses*; if it be given chearfully, it may then, in a great measure, be esteem'd as a *Matter of Bounty*, and not of *Compulsion*, much less of *Covetousness*.

In

In Answer to the latter Objection, taken from the Abuse of Charitable lasting Donations; that they who have it in their Power, may not be altogether discouraged from making 'em, I come now,

3dly. In the last Place, to lessen the Weight and to remove the Force of it.

The *Abuse of Charity*, it must be acknowledged, is one of the greatest *Abuses*. It is a Crime of such a complicated Nature, that one wou'd think that no *Christian* shou'd, because no *Honest Man*, who has any Sense of *Humanity* within him, can, be wilfully guilty of it.—It is a *Robbing* not the *Rich*, but the *Poor*; not *One*, but *Many*.—It is the Robbing the *Dead*, (worse than robbing the *Sepulchres of the Dead*) the *Living*, and those who are not yet *Alive*: It is, lastly, not the *Robbing of Man* only, but of *God* also; who is pleased to plead *the Cause of the Fatherless and Widow*, who, as he vouchsafes to acknowledge *Good Works* done unto the *Poor* as *done unto Himself*, so also will he reckon *Wicked Deeds* done unto them, as done unto Himself likewise.

These, and many more than these aggravating *Circumstances*, attend the *Non-Employment*,

ployment, or Alienating of those Sums which are left to the Poor.

Nor is the *Misemployment* of 'em, or *Employing* them, tho' not to private *Use*, to other *Uses and Persons* than what they were Originally designed by the *Pious Donors thereof*, altogether *guiltless concerning this Matter*; (except they were design'd for *Superstitious* or *Illegal Uses*, in which Case they revert to the *King*); yea, it also is an *Iniquity* that ought not to be so much as named amongst Christians.

It is the same Act of *Injustice* with Respect to the *Persons* to whom the *Charity* was evidently designed, and who therefore have a *Right* to it; whether it be given to other Persons who were excluded from the Benefit of it, by the Will and Intent of the Donor, or not given at all; since in both Cases they are equally defrauded of it, and it is kept back from them.

And if those Sins are so exceeding sinful, of how much sorer Punishment shall they, who are knowingly guilty of 'em, be thought worthy in the other World (tho' not in this) than they who rob upon the Highway?

D

And

And yet, notwithstanding the exceeding Sinfulness of these Sins, and most mischievous Consequences that attend 'em, how common and frequent are they amongst us! insomuch that, if there be any Reliance on Common Report, (to our *Shame be it spoken!*) there is scarce a Charitable Foundation, or Benefaction, in any Place, which is not said to be some Way or other, either thro' *Wilfulness*, or thro' *Carelessness*, miserably perverted and abus'd, if not entirely lost and defeated.

And yet it is to be hoped, that *all is not done according to the Cry of it*, that there are many who are *accus'd falsely*; and who, upon an impartial Tryal and Examination, may be found not any way to have been false to the Trust that is repos'd in them.

But still it must be allowed, that the *Complaint* is general; and that there is too much Reason for it.

And they also, giving Reason for it, do not only abuse those *Charitable Bequests* which are already made, but (which is a still further Aggravation of their Crimes) they, *as far as is possible, and in them lies, prevent* others for the Time to come; for

who

who will be so willing to give, or to leave any thing to any Pious or Charitable Use for *ever*, when he has so great Reason to fear, that it will seldom or *never* be faithfully applied to the *Persons*, or to the *Uses* he designed?

And yet the Objection, strong as it is, may, in a great measure, be deprived of its Force; if we would impartially consider,

1st. That if the frequent Abuse of *Charity* be a sufficient Objection against leaving any thing to any *Charitable Use*; then the frequent, more frequent, Abuse of Riches by those to whom they are left, is an Argument against heaping up and leaving them to those that come after us.

It will not, I suppose, be denied, but that the Abuse of great Estates by *Children* or *Heirs*, is as common, yea more common than the Abuse of those Estates which are left to Pious and Charitable Uses.— And that there are many *Prodigal Sons*, who quickly spend what is left them in *Riotous Living*; so that the *Things* which shou'd have been for their *Wealth*, are often the *Occasion* of their falling the sooner, into greater *Ruin*: And yet who makes this an Objection against *heaping up Riches*,

and leaving them to his Children? Why then is it thought so unanswerable, when made against leaving an Estate to be a lasting Fund of Charity?

2dly. There are several Methods of Publick Charity established in this Nation, which are not liable, so liable, to be perverted and abus'd; and if *Charitable Donations* were made with Prudence and Discretion, the original Intent and Design inscribed in the Church, the Accounts of 'em publicly inspected and examined, they would not be subject to so many and great Abuses.

3dly. But still, suppose they are in some measure abused; yet shou'd not this altogether *discourage*, because it will not, in the least, *deprive*, the Benefactor of his Reward hereafter; only let him take the most prudent Method he can to prevent Abuse, and *whatsoever he gives, give heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto Men*; and then, tho' Men shamefully pervert it, yet of the Lord will he receive the same Recompence of Reward; the *Iniquity of Others shall not make his Charity of none Effect* in the Sight of God.

The last Thing I shall urge, in Answer to this Objection taken from the Abuse of *Charitable Foundations*, is the Provision which the Law has made to prevent, or correct and reform it, by *Charitable Commissions*.

These, if frequently taken out, and faithfully executed, wou'd effectually put a Stop to this crying Evil; and which, perhaps, nothing else can stop: Which shews the great *Usefulness*, the *Expediency*, yea, the great *Necessity*, of frequently taking them out, and faithfully *Executing* them, and that the Remedy should be as universal as the Disease.

Let us therefore pray unto God, that he wou'd please to put into the Hearts of the Good and the Great, in other Dioceses, to take out these Commissions, and faithfully to execute them.—And that all those who already are, or may be entrusted with them, duly understanding what Authority they have, and seriously considering, that the Cause they are engaged in, is the Cause of the *Poor*, yea, the Cause of *God*, who will *plead their Cause*; may, with a prudent, well-temper'd *Zeal*, and intrepid *Courage*, and unwearied *Constancy*, without *Prejudice*,

dice, and *without Partiality*; notwithstanding the Fatigue, the Expence, the Trouble of Attendance; maugre all the Delays, the Oppositions, the Reflections they meet with in the Way, go on and prosper in this great and good Work.— That no Love towards Friends, no Hatred towards Enemies, no Fear of Men, nor the Desire of *the Praise that cometh of Men*, may in the least Corrupt or Bias their Judgments; but that they may make Right *Inquisitions*, and decree Righteous *Decrees*, in the most perplexed and intricate Cases: so that not only the present, but future Generations may have Reason *to call them Blessed*, and *to bless the Name of the Lord for 'em*.

And to this End and Purpose, let they who Petition, or Prosecute, or are any ways concerned in the *Prosecution* of this Affair, see that *nothing be done thro' Strife or Vain-Glory*, but that *in Lowliness of Mind*, they act upon a right Principle, and to a good End.

And whilst they are endeavouring to find out, and to rectify the *Abuses* of Acts of Charity, they do not lose the Virtue of *Charity* itself, and of *Justice* also.

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Let ~~they~~ who are *Prosecuted* take care also, that they entertain no *hard Thoughts*, much less give *hard Words*, to those who are any ways concerned against them; not to ascribe that to a bad Principle, which, as it ought only to proceed, so it is charitably to be supposed only to proceed, from a good one; lest to the Sin of abusing Charity (if found guilty) they also add that of uncharitably *Judging*, and incur the Penalty that is denounced against those *who are angry without a Cause*.

Let ~~those~~ who are able to inform, without Fear or Favour give in their Information; do their utmost to *bring to light any hidden Things of Darknefs*, and to *make manifest* the Misapplications that, thro' Ignorance, may have been made.

Let no one screen others in their Wickedness; conceal the Evil he knows they have done, or even their Mistakes, if of any Consequence, which he knows they have committed.

Let no one throw in unnecessary Delays, make groundless Objections, and unreasonable Oppositions; for he who *does these Things, is a Partaker of their Evil Deeds*.

Let

Let every one, who has it any way in his Power, yield an helping Hand, and contribute his Assistance; and let all those who no other Way can, at least by their Prayers, help forward this *the most excellent Way* of doing Good; " that all things may be " so order'd and settled upon the best and " surest Foundations, that Peace and Unity, " Justice and Charity, may be established " amongst us to all Generations.

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